

Call to Order

Chair Moffitt called the meeting to order at 7:01p.m. in the Select Board Conference Room. Present were: Chair Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt, Linn Anderson, Paul Russo, Andrew Betts, Mary Ellen Logee, Bojay Taylor, Paul Monticciolo and Spiro Christopoulos. Also present were Donna Walsh, Finance Director, Patrick Lawlor and the Town Manager. Absent was John Barry. The meeting was videotaped and live cablecast.

Liaison Updates

Pension Obligation Bond (POB) Subcommittee – Mr. Russo reported that the subcommittee had met twice and Mr. Fraser was scheduled to speak at the Select Board Meeting in March. Ms. Moffitt added that the Finance Committee would be meeting simultaneously and, as a co-sponsor with the Town Manager of that article, could be present at that time if needed. Ms. Walsh posted several documents in the dropbox. Ms. Walsh and the Town Manager will be on the next Finance Committee meeting agenda.

Ms. Anderson noted the Finance Committee Report would indicate the impact of a POB to the taxpayer.

PTBAC – Ms. Anderson reported that bids for Senior Center had been received.

Information Technology – Mr. Puzzanghera

Mr. Puzzanghera presented his FY21 budget (see powerpoint presentation attached) and discussion ensued on the following highlights:

- a) With regard to student devices, school supplies devices to K-5, and savings are realized by grades 6-12 bringing their own devices (BYOD). Small number (125) are supplied.
- b) Specialized computers for engineering, music, graphics etc. are supplied in classroom.
- c) Savings realized when costly Macbooks (\$1,200/ea) were replaced by availability of Chromebooks (\$300-400).
- d) However, Chromebooks can no longer be used for mandatory online testing and cumbersome process of moving computers across schools for testing needs to be addressed.
- e) Alternatives to address unfunded state mandate for standardized testing requirements under consideration and being pursued.
- f) Routine school practice of “spending down” remaining budget dollars at end of year to purchase computers is not effective from an economic and IT support perspective.
- g) Homogenous process needed for IT to follow in supporting approved devices.
- h) Each department has line item for technology and new standardized code alerts IT to purchase order before completion.
- i) Going out to bid for lease vs. purchase more cost effective over three-year leasing cycle.
- j) Cumulative remaining budget balances over past several years is \$100-125K.
- k) Wisdom of measuring utilization levels of existing devices to gauge effectiveness of investment between intense users and casual users and provide that data feedback to department heads for strategic planning purposes.

- l) The expenditure of capital funds for a purchase with maintenance support eventually flows to operating budget in a typical three-year period for the continuing maintenance, support and upgrade of product.
- m) Challenges of staffing in light of marketplace competition in the technology field and change of mindset from private sector to value of long-range pension in public sector.
- n) Need to coordinate departments' technology initiatives with IT and impact on support.
- o) The priority of providing adequate state-of-the-art security coverage of town infrastructure.
- p) The need for improving overall planning process and the reduction of existing backlog of projects.

Department of Public Safety – Chief Keefe

Chief Keefe presented his FY21 budget (see attached powerpoint presentation) and discussion ensued on the following highlights:

- a) With staff of 53 sworn officers, demand for service is made up in overtime.
- b) Challenge created due to new officers' unwillingness to serve overtime hours.
- c) Fleet being replaced with combination of gas and hybrid (\$4K savings/yr) models.
- d) Performance will be carefully monitored by fleet manager.
- e) Town has taken over management of phone system but hard lines at public safety center remain for recording incoming calls and tracking the process from dispatch to resolution.
- f) Established track-proven vendors of replacement CAD/RMS software currently being interviewed including PAMET.
- g) Ease of transition due to new officers' computer savvy.
- h) Unmet financial needs of department do not compromise public safety in any way.

Revenue and Expenditure Task Force – Mr. Lawlor and Mr. MacKay

Mr. Lawlor summarized the work of the Task Force. He was accompanied by members MacKay and Connors. Discussion ensued including the following highlights:

- a) The Task Force, chartered at nine members and due to attrition 7 members, held fifteen meetings and released its report in January.
- b) While acting as advisor to Town Manager, the Task Force maintained an independent and objective focus.
- c) Understanding the uniqueness of the groundwork of municipal finance, the Task Force reviewed assumptions of revenues and long-term expenses, including unfunded liabilities and other cost areas of health insurance, retirement and OPEB.
- d) Recommendations, although "lofty," were not unattainable.
- e) Major milestone in process was anticipating slowdown in new growth by monitoring local receipts, with recommendation for forecasting from five-year average to ten-year average, resulting in \$.5M reduction.
- f) Work plan for second cycle of the Task Force will begin in late February/early March.
- g) Enormity of size of unfunded liabilities will be a key focus in next cycle.
- h) More engaged involvement of the Select Board involvement in the process is key.
- i) Plan for disseminating report to the public and initiating meaningful discussion.

- j) Finance Report will reference Task Force report and recommendations of Finance Committee and long range plan to address unfunded liabilities.
- k) “Wrapping our arms” around the proverbial problem welcomes as many “arms” as possible in the process.

Finance Committee Report - ATM

Mr. Monticciolo reviewed the progress of the report and letter. He asked members to review the initial letter outline and share comments. Charts in the budget book will be used in the Finance Committee Report. The Town Manager is expected to present modeling showing various ways of addressing the unfunded liability, including the possible use of pension obligation bonds. The Committee would like the Finance Committee report to show the future impact to taxpayers if the unfunded obligation continues to grow and an override (or other solution) is needed.

Next Meetings

February 26 – Town Manager; Dept of Community Services; Fire Chief;

March 4 – POB - Ms. Walsh and Mr. Frazier

March 7 – Saturday Department Heads Budget Meeting

Schedule meetings every Monday and Wednesday in March

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Christopulos and seconded by Mr. Russo, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Motion passed 8-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:45PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

IT Presentation

Dept of Public Safety Presentation